

REMARKS

Claims 11 and 17 were each amended to emphasize that each sheet has “a front thermal recording surface and a rear surface”, that each sheet has “a marked corner portion and an unmarked corner portion”, and that the marked corner portion has a curvature radius “different from the curvature radius of the unmarked corner portion, to differentiate between the front thermal recording surface and the rear surface based on the different configuration of the corner portions.”

Reference No. 1 (U.S. Patent No. 6,878,670 to Seki, et al.) discloses only a heat-sensitive recording material employing a color forming reaction between a leuco dye and a developer. Reference No. 1 discloses *no* corner portions of different curvatures, nor any means to differentiate between a front thermal recording surface and a rear surface of the material.

Reference No. 2 (Japanese Patent No. 02-084382 to Kishimi) discloses an apparatus for thermally recording an image, characters, or the like on a heat sensitive material with a thermal head, such that an area of the heat sensitive material other than the area in which the image or the like is thermally recorded in response to an input signal is thermally recorded at a predetermined density level. The heat sensitive material used in this apparatus has four corner portions each of which has the *same* configuration as shown in Fig. 1, Fig. 6 and Fig. 7. However, it does not have at least one marked corner portion with a curvature radius which is different from the other corner portions, nor any means to differentiate between a front thermal recording surface and a rear surface of the material.

Reference No. 3 (Japanese Patent No. JP2002-059653 to Yoshida) discloses a card constituted of a card base having a reversible thermal recording layer capable of presenting visual information rewritably, wherein the reversible thermal recording layer is formed of a rewritable leuco

dye layer, while the card base is formed of a base material having transparency. The card has four corner portions each of which has the *same* configuration as shown in Fig. 1 and Figs. 4 - 7. However, it does not have at least one marked corner portion with a curvature radius which is different from the other corner portions, nor any means to differentiate between a front thermal recording surface and a rear surface of the card.

Reference No. 4 (U.S. Patent No. 6,972,781 to Tytgat) discloses a method of generating a hard copy of an image on a substantially rectangular heat sensitive recording material having rounded corners. Reference No. 4 does not make reference to the number of rounded corners, the distribution of the rounded corners, and the curvature radius of the rounded corners, nor any means to differentiate between a front thermal recording surface and a rear surface of the material.

Reference No. 5 (U.S. Patent No. 6,106,910 to Tan, et al.) discloses only a print media with a near infrared sense mark. The near infrared sense mark is used for triggering an automated operation such as printing, advancing, cutting and/or dispensing a print medium. Reference No. 5 fails to disclose a print media with four corner portions and makes no reference to the curvature radius of corner portions, nor any means to differentiate between a front thermal recording surface and a rear surface of the print media.

In summary, in References Nos. 2 and 3, it is impossible to differentiate between the front and rear surfaces of the sheet before printing, since each of the four rounded corner portions has the same configuration so that the sheet before printing has the same appearance at its front and rear surfaces. Thus, References Nos. 2 and 3 fail to disclose the technical idea of differentiating between the front and rear surfaces of the sheet by means of the configuration of the corner portions. Although Reference No. 4 discloses rounded corner portions, it makes no reference to the technical

idea of differentiating between front and rear surfaces of the sheet by means of those rounded corner portions. Neither Reference No. 1 nor No. 5 makes any reference to a sheet with corner portions.

Each of Reference Nos. 1 - 5 fails to disclose the technical idea of utilizing the corner portions as a means for differentiation between the front and rear surfaces of the sheet. Therefore, Reference Nos. 1 - 5 fail to disclose or suggest the structural features defined in claims 11 and 17.

In view of the foregoing points, the person skilled in the art cannot arrive at the inventions defined in claims 11 and 17, by combining the prior art disclosed in Reference Nos. 1 - 5. Hence, the present inventions defined in claims 11 and 17 are considered to be based on an inventive step. For this reason, the claims 11 and 17 are deemed to be allowable. Claims 12-16, which are dependent claims of claim 11, and claims 18-20, which are dependent claims of claim 17, are also allowable for the same reasons that claims 11 and 17 are allowable.

Wherefore, a favorable action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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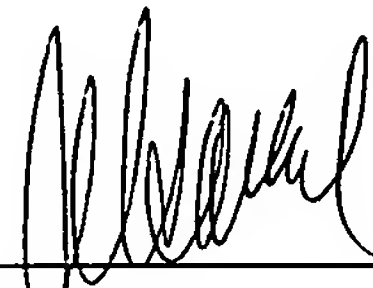
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